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International Conference on Population and Development ◆ Preparatory Committee II

Chronology of Events

1993

10-21 May	◆ Second session of the Preparatory Committee for ICPD; U.N. Headquarters, New York.
1-18 June	◆ UNDP\UNFPA Governing Council, 40th session, U.N. Headquarters, New York.
28 June - 30 July	◆ 1993 ECOSOC substantive session, Geneva, Switzerland.
11 July	◆ World Population Day.
26-27 August	◆ Roundtable (1): "Women's Perspectives on Family Planning, Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights" (Ottawa, Canada). (Four more roundtables are expected to take place before Preparatory Committee III, as well as two meetings of high-level advisers).
24 August-1 September	◆ 22nd IUSSP (International Union for the Scientific Study of Population) General Conference; Montreal, Canada.
21 September-mid-December	◆ U.N. General Assembly, 48th regular session; consideration of agenda item "International Conference on Population and Development".

1994

11-22 April	◆ Third session of the Preparatory Committee for ICPD; U.N. Headquarters, New York.
July	◆ 1994 ECOSOC substantive session, U.N. Headquarters, New York.
5-13 September	◆ International Conference on Population and Development; Cairo, Egypt.

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Experts' Meetings, Regional Conferences Set Stage for International Conference on Population and Development

Recommendations from six expert group meetings and five regional conferences will help shape the proposed agenda for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

The gatherings are part of the preparatory process leading up to the Conference, to be held in Cairo, Egypt, from 5-13 September 1994. The ICPD Preparatory Committee will hold its second session from 10-21 May 1993 at United Nations headquarters. (The first session was held in March 1991.)

The six experts' meetings were authorized by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and organized by the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Each addressed a group of issues deemed critical in the coming decade: population, environment and development; population policies and programmes; population and women; family planning, health and family well-being; population growth and demographic structure; and population distribution and migration.

Each meeting included a group of 15 well-known experts (invited in their personal capacities), along with representatives of United Nations units, bodies and organizations, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Each adopted a set of recommendations to submit to the second ICPD Preparatory Committee session.

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The first meeting, on **population, environment and development**, was held at United Nations headquarters from 20-24 January 1992. It considered the likely effect of population trends on prospects for sustained economic growth and sustainable development. Discussion focused on the adverse consequences of population growth and concentration for the availability and use of freshwater, soils, forests and other natural resources.

Reducing these harmful impacts, the meeting concluded, will require a combination of slower population growth, more rational population distribution, alleviation of poverty, environmentally safer consumption patterns, new management practices, and the use of technologies that replace fossil fuels with renewable energy resources and increase the productivity of scarce water resources.

Environmentally motivated economic activities (e.g., reforestation or small-scale irrigation) could create employment for poor people. Equitable economic growth and increased education and health care would enable the poor to use natural resources in a sustainable manner. And improving people's livelihood would result in smaller families and reduced population growth rates.

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Strengthened research and data collection, popular education and community participation are all essential to the achievement of these goals, the experts observed.

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The meeting on **population policies and programmes**, held in Cairo from 12-16 April 1992, agreed that to stabilize global population, development plans should reflect long-term objectives, and programmes should be evaluated in terms of demographic impact. Sustainable development will require not only population policies, but also effective action plans, committed leadership, local political support, private input, an emphasis on service quality, and available resources.

To counter the growing scarcity of resources, donor countries were called upon to try to double their 1990 contributions to population programmes by the year 2000. Developing countries were urged to recover costs of services through user fees wherever possible, without abandoning those unable to pay or reducing service quality.

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The expert meeting on **population and women** was held in Gaborone, Botswana, from 22-26 June 1992, and financed by a contribution from the Netherlands. It sought to identify measures that could empower women, improve health, favourably affect family formation and also promote development. A major theme was the need to greatly increase female representation in policy-making, planning, management and execution of programmes. In the monitoring of all population and development programmes explicit consideration should be given to their impact on women. Improved educational opportunities for girls and women, and removal of barriers to women's employment were recognized as having far-reaching impact on fertility, and on the health and welfare of women and children.

Participants recommended that Governments encourage the active involvement of men in family planning, child-rearing and housework, and urged Governments and employers to eliminate gender-related job discrimination. They called for universal, confidential access to safe methods of fertility regulation, stepped-up efforts to combat sexually transmitted diseases, vigorous action to stop the practice of genital mutilation, and enforcement of minimum-age-at-marriage laws. Regarding family planning, the participants emphasized the importance of adapting services to meet the differing needs of individuals.

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The meeting on **family planning, health and family well-being** was held in Bangalore, India, from 26-29 October 1992. Participants observed that the impact of family planning programmes on fertility is strengthened when socio-economic development occurs simultaneously. While demographic goals are a legitimate part of sustainable development policies, family planning services should aim to meet the reproductive needs of individuals, based on free and informed choice, by making available a wide range of contraceptive methods and related information.

The experts identified abortion as a major, neglected public health concern, and recommended that all women be assured access to counselling and safe-abortion services. They stressed that prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS should be part of reproductive health activities, and called for provision of confidential services and family life education to adolescent men and women. Particular attention was also given to the need to improve the quality of services. And they noted with concern the rapidly growing resource requirements of family planning programmes; they called for increased donor support and greater attention to cost effectiveness and cost recovery.

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The experts on **population growth and demographic structure**, meeting in Paris from 16-20 November 1992, examined the inevitability of persistent growth well into the next century as a consequence of the young age structure in developing countries today. Noting that poverty both exacerbates the consequences of rapid population growth and is itself an obstacle to fertility reduction, they called for adoption of strategies to reduce social inequality, along with increased international assistance to least developed countries.

Improvements in women's health, education and access to jobs were seen as critical to effecting a demographic transition, as were comprehensive and more evenly distributed reproductive health-care programmes.

Considerable attention was devoted to the rapid process of population ageing under way in many areas, and to the necessity to allocate resources equitably to meet the needs of the elderly.

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The expert meeting on **population distribution and migration** was held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, from 18-23 January 1993. It suggested ways to improve economic opportunities, infrastructure and resource protection in rural areas; and to strengthen management of rapidly growing urban centres. It recommended a reduction of trade barriers to ease the pressures underlying increased international migration, along with greater investment in the migrants' countries of origin.

Governments were urged to protect the rights of migrants, end discrimination against female migrants, permit the reunification of families and the naturalization of long-term residents, combat racism and xenophobia, and adopt sanctions against those who organize illegal migration or knowingly hire undocumented migrants. The meeting also considered the human rights and safety of refugees, and urged the international community to support conflict resolution and long-term reconstruction plans essential to the success of repatriation efforts.

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Five **regional conferences** were called to review the experience of population policies and programmes, and their relationship to development issues; four have been held to date. Each adopted a set of goals or recommendations that will be available to participants at the ICPD Preparatory Committee's second session.

The first of these meetings was the **Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference**, jointly sponsored by UNFPA and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and held in Denpasar, Indonesia, from 19-27 August 1992. A meeting of senior officials was followed by a two-day ministerial meeting, which adopted the Bali Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development calling for a firm political and financial commitment to incorporate population and environmental concerns in all national development efforts.

The declaration urged all countries with rapid population growth to lower their fertility rates to 2.2 children per woman and reduce infant mortality to 40 per 1,000 live births by the year 2010; and to cut maternal mortality by at least half. It called for integration of family planning with health, education and welfare services; equal opportunities for women; strengthened education efforts and other preventive measures to control the spread of AIDS; and long-term strategies to deal with ageing.

Action to improve life in Asia's burgeoning cities was also advocated, along with efforts to provide employment in the countryside to stem rural migration to urban areas.

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The **Third African Population Conference**, on the theme of "Population, Family and Sustainable Development", was jointly organized by the Economic Commission for Africa, the Organization of African Unity and UNFPA, and held in Dakar, Senegal, from 7-12 December 1992. The ministerial-level meeting proclaimed the commitment of African countries to address population problems, and to formulate and implement comprehensive population policies.

Recognizing that population matters are an integral part of the socio-economic development process, participants issued the Dakar/Ngor Declaration, calling on Governments to implement a comprehensive list of specific measures to address population issues, and appealed to donors to increase population assistance.

The Declaration also called on African Governments to work to reduce population growth in the region from 3.0 per cent in 1992 to 2.5 per cent by the year 2000 and to 2 per cent by the year 2010, and to increase the contraceptive prevalence rate from 10 per cent to 20 per cent by 2000 and to 40 per cent by 2010. It called for an increase in life expectancy from 45 years to 55 by the turn of the century, and a 50 per cent reduction in maternal mortality.

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The Economic Commission for Europe, the Council of Europe and UNFPA jointly convened the **European Population Conference**, held in Geneva from 23-26 March 1993. Participants from Europe, Canada, Israel and the United States recommended that measures be taken to make life easier for families with children; to coordinate policies to slow migration to the developed countries; and to seek a balance between population, production and consumption.

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The **Arab Population Conference**, jointly sponsored by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the League of Arab States and UNFPA, was held in Amman, Jordan, from 4-8 April 1993. It included a three-day meeting of experts and senior officials, followed by a two-day ministerial meeting. Papers were presented and recommendations issued on population, environment and development; population growth and demographic structure; population distribution and internal migration; international migration; population and women; family planning, health and family well-being; and population policies and programmes.

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Finally, the **Latin American and the Caribbean Population and Development Conference**, jointly sponsored by UNFPA and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, will take place in Mexico City from 29 April to 4 May 1993. An October 1992 preparatory meeting of government experts centred on six themes: population growth, structure and distribution in the region; population dynamics and development in the Caribbean; population policies and programmes; population growth and distribution, and their relation to development and the environment; women and population dynamics; and family planning, health and family well-being.

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World Conference Preparatory Session to Outline Actions Linking Population to Sustained Growth, Sustainable Development

The connection between population and sustained economic growth and sustainable development is the theme of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The preparatory activities carried out since the first session of the Preparatory Committee will be discussed at United Nations headquarters, 10-21 May 1993, when the ICPD Preparatory Committee holds its second meeting. The meeting will be attended by representatives of Governments, non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations and the UN system. To facilitate the participation of the less developed countries the Economic and Social Council created a voluntary Trust Fund.

The Conference, to be held in Cairo, Egypt, in September 1994, is to adopt an international plan of action on the integration of population concerns into development activities. The plan will stress the imperative to consider population/development links when addressing population issues.

The Secretary General of the Conference, Dr. Nafis Sadik, has outlined her proposals for the plan's conceptual framework in a document prepared for the second session of the Preparatory Committee. This background article summarizes these proposals.

The upcoming meeting will focus on the aims and structure of the ICPD plan of action. It is hoped that the Preparatory Committee's discussion of the proposed conceptual framework will provide guidance to the Conference Secretariat in preparing a draft of the plan of action for consideration at the Preparatory Committee's third and final session in April 1994.

ICPD is to concentrate on six groups of population and development issues identified as requiring the greatest attention in the coming decade:

- Population growth and demographic changes, including ageing, and the regional diversity of these changes.
- Population policies and programmes, and the mobilization of resources for developing countries.
- The links among population, environmental and development issues.
- Internal and international migration, and other changes in population distribution.
- Women's roles and status, and their relation to population dynamics. Issues in this area include adolescent motherhood, maternal and child health, education and employment.
- Family planning programmes, health and family well-being.

The Conference will also review progress made in implementing the World Population Plan of Action, adopted by the 1974 World Population Conference, and the recommendations adopted in 1984 at the International Conference on Population, and will endeavour to identify obstacles encountered and means of overcoming them. A key aim will be to increase international awareness of population issues and their links to development.

Guiding ICPD's recommendations for action will be the need to alleviate conditions of poverty, to promote accelerated economic growth within the context of sustainable development, and to deal with the consequences of rapid population growth.

The Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development has prepared three scenarios for world population growth, with corresponding projections. Under the "medium-variant" projection, there will be 6.2 billion people by the year 2000 and 8.5 billion by 2025. The world population may reach 7.9 billion by 2025 under the low-variant projection, or as much as 9.1 billion according to the high-variant projection.

Concerns that should be central to all action on population and development include: the rights and responsibilities of individuals and society; reproductive choice and rights; intergenerational equity and responsibility; opposition to coercion; links between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development; protection of most vulnerable groups; and ethical and moral considerations.

The integration of population concerns into the development process requires an appreciation of population's diverse links to both economic activity and environmental conditions. The relationships between population and socio-economic progress differ according to national perspectives and experiences. Nevertheless, actions in this regard should emphasize improving the quality of life and alleviating poverty.

While the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development highlighted the impact of human activity on the environment, further attention needs to be paid to the likely consequences of future population levels and related patterns of consumption and production.

A wide range of issues involving women and population concerns are related to the achievement of genuine gender equality, an essential goal if women are to be full partners in all aspects of development.

Patterns of population growth vary significantly among regions, and within regions and countries. Growth rates are declining in many countries, but at different speeds; in other countries this process has not yet begun. Population continues to increase in absolute terms even where growth rates are falling. Future world population size will be determined principally by the rate of fertility decline in developing countries, where over 90 per cent of the population growth in the next decade will occur.

Due to persistent high fertility levels, children and youth make up substantial proportions of many developing countries' overall populations. In some cases, approximately half of the country's population is 15 years or younger. Meeting the current and future needs of these children and youth poses great economic and social challenges.

The population of elderly persons is steadily increasing in many developed and developing countries, with significant economic and social ramifications. Family formation patterns, and family composition and structure are also changing, necessitating new policies and programmes to address the effects of these changes.

In many developing countries, it has been shown that increased investment in education and health care, including family planning, can rapidly reduce fertility.

Family planning programmes have two basic aims: to allow couples and individuals to exercise their right to determine the number and spacing of their children and to promote the health of women, children and families.

Adolescent pregnancies, prevalent in both developed and developing countries, present a number of issues of special concern for the well-being of young people — especially women — and their children.

ICPD will need to assess existing health goals and targets, and to formulate new objectives in light of recent medical developments. There is both an opportunity and an urgent need to reach an international consensus on the demographic, health and social impact of the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) pandemic. Population programmes and family planning are an important part of AIDS prevention.

Maternal mortality remains high in developing countries; the means of reducing it are well-known. An estimated 20-40 per cent of maternal deaths are due to unsafe abortions. Action to reduce morbidity and mortality related to pregnancy and child-bearing should be considered at the Conference.

Measures are needed to protect the rights of documented and undocumented migrants, and to ensure that migration has positive consequences in both countries of origin and destination. The numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers are growing in many regions. The rights of refugees should be ensured and their right to asylum reaffirmed, while stressing the need to address the underlying causes of refugee flows.

Within countries, diverse steps are required to deal with the continuing growth of large urban centres; the needs of the urban poor demand special emphasis. Policies and actions need to take into account both the positive and negative impact of migration and changes in population distribution on sustained growth and sustainable development.

An important objective of ICPD is to ensure that information on the links between population and development is made widely available. Educational efforts will emphasize "choices and responsibilities" related to population.

Trained personnel, and effective institutional arrangements, are needed to help develop family planning programmes, especially in developing countries. Human resource development should be linked to programme design, monitoring, evaluation, supervision and service quality.

Guidelines for the complementary use of censuses, civil registration systems and socio-demographic surveys should be formulated; and the results of such research analysed and widely disseminated. Basic and operational research in population should be strengthened. In addition, research in human reproduction needs to be supported, particularly to develop safe and effective contraceptive technologies for men and women.

National decisions and actions will have significant impact on the quality of

life and global population levels. Population policies need to be fully integrated into countries' development strategies. Cooperation between developing countries, developed-country assistance to developing countries, and the links between population-related assistance and broader development assistance all need to be emphasized.

Community groups, non-governmental organizations and the private sector can play an important role in population activities. This is increasingly accepted in many countries, and should be considered by ICPD.

Finally, follow-up arrangements must ensure effective implementation and ongoing monitoring and review of Conference decisions. Within the United Nations system, this will involve integrating population concerns into evaluation and policy formation. Funding, technical assistance and coordination efforts will also be required.